THIS FALL IN
WESTWOOD

A COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Volume 7 Number 1 Fall 1994

Thoughts on Friendship . . .

Of all the things
which wisdom provides
to make life entirely happy,
much the greatest
is the possession
of friendship.
—Epicurus

Each friend represents a world in us,
a world possibly not born until
they arrive,
and it is only by this meeting
that a new world is born.
—Anais Nin

It is great to have friends
when one is young,
but indeed it is still more so
when you are getting older.
When we are young,
friends are, like everything else,
a matter of course.
In the old days we know
what it means to have them.
—Edvard Grieg

Photograph by Dwyer Photography

As a result of this year's Intergenerational Program, Gloria Carter (seated) and Daniele Menard have become good friends.

TOWN NEWS

DID YOU KNOW . . .

- **The Westwood Historical Society has begun a fund drive to move and restore the Fisher School.** Used from 1847 to 1905, it is the only one-room schoolhouse remaining in Westwood. The building will be moved to High Street, next to the Middle School. It will store and display the Society's historical collection and be a living history setting for meetings and school classes. The goal is to do this in time to celebrate the Town's Centennial in 1997. Anyone wishing to make a lasting historical contribution to the town through a tax-deductible donation, may send a contribution made out to the Fisher School Fund to: Westwood Historical Society, Fisher School Fund, Box 2575, Westwood, MA 02090.

- **New property owners** should have received, as of July 1st, a **real estate tax bill**. If new residents do not have that bill they should call the tax collector's office at 326-6450 to receive a copy.

- On May 6, 1991, by a vote of the Annual Town Meeting, a **quarterly tax billing system** became law for Westwood taxpayers. The billing dates for Fiscal Year 1995 are:

  1st quarter mailed July 1, 1994 due August 1, 1994

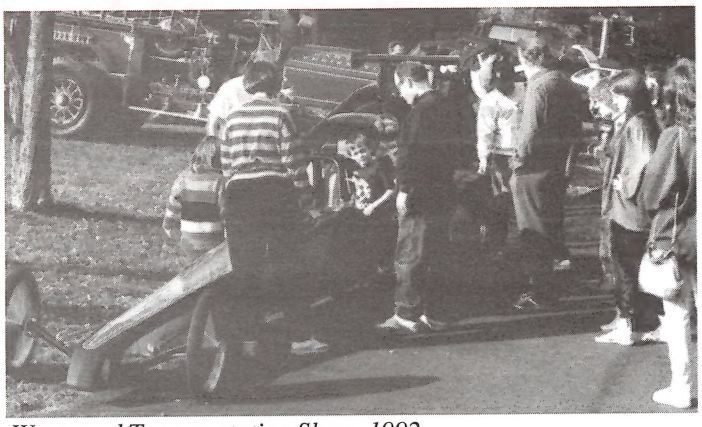
  2nd quarter mailed October 1, 1994 due November 1, 1994

  3rd quarter mailed December 31, 1994 due February 1, 1995

  4th quarter mailed April 1, 1995 due May 1, 1995

  The first and second quarterly bills reflect only a tax amount based on the Fiscal 1994 value and tax rate. Each should represent approximately 25% of the 1994 tax liability. The third and fourth quarter bills will be *actual* bills based on the newly certified values and a 1995 tax rate.

- The **Second Westwood Transportation Show** will be held on Sunday, September 25th (see back page for details). It will feature early bikes, cars and trucks of all vintages. A DJ will play "oldies" music from 12:30 P.M. to 3:30 P.M. and refreshments will be available. The donation of $7 pre-registration, $10 on September 25th, for those wishing to enter the show, and $1 for spectators, will benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association and the Westwood Recreation Department.



Westwood Transportation Show, 1992.

- The **observance of Veterans Day** goes back to 1921 when an American World War I soldier, his name "known but to God", was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. The burial site became the personification of dignity and reverence for America's veterans. This memorial gesture took place at 11:00 A.M. giving recognition to the ending of WWI at 11 A.M. on Nov 11, 1918 — the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. The day became known as "Armistice Day". The hope was that that war would be the "war to end all wars", but World War II shattered the dream. Kansas Congressman Edwin K. Reese then proposed that Armistice Day be changed to Veterans Day and be made an occasion to honor those who have served America in all wars. President Eisenhower signed the legislation. Since then, additional "unknown" soldiers from all wars have been buried alongside the WWI soldier in Arlington. Although most holidays are now celebrated on a Monday, the significance of the November 11th date has remained intact.

- Last year the Selectmen distributed a pamphlet to all residents, entitled, **"Westwood Will Be What We Make It"**, asking for volunteers for town positions. The town received about 100 responses, a significant and encouraging number. This year, when it was time to make appointments to the various boards, a meeting for those 100 residents was held, to explain the objectives, methods of functioning, frequency of meetings and other points of interest about all town boards and committees. A spontaneous and strong feeling of commitment to the town, an eagerness by those in attendance to be involved and an impressive caliber of skills resulted in 15 residents being appointed to boards or committees. The others have not been neglected, but there were more people than vacant positions. A file has been created at Town Hall so that when positions are available, these people will be contacted. In addition, the town will be holding periodic forums for focus groups of residents to express their concerns or feelings about particular issues. This will keep interested residents actively involved, will provide varied perspectives on the issues confronting the town, and will insure that when there are issues that affect everyone, a wide cross-section of the town is heard from, not only special interest groups. ❑

LIVING HISTORY

When Carol Morante's mother needed more water than their old artesian well (a well that goes through rock) would provide, she would have to climb into their dirt-floored cellar and pump more from another well. But what can you expect from a 1760 home in the "modern" world of 1943!

Today, Carol still has that original pump from that original well and it sits on her family room hearth. In fact, in the home of Carol and Ralph Morante on Oak Street, many things still remain as they were.

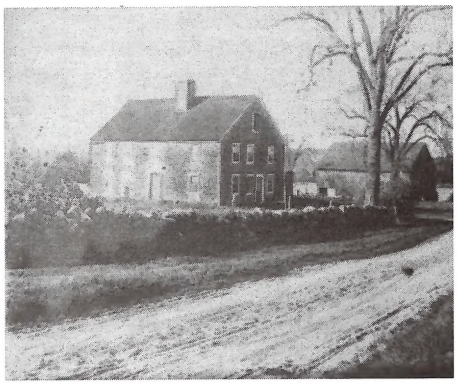
Carol Morante's father shingles the roof. 1943

The plaque on the home reads "1760, Benjamin Colburn home". He was a wealthy man who owned 300 acres of land when he built this home. "You can tell he was wealthy,"says Carol, "because the beams in the front room are covered rather than rough wood." Martha Jones bought the home and land after the Colburns. Martha Jones used the land as a farm and she was reputed to be a great cook. It was on her land that the Martha Jones School was built.

Through the years much work was done on the home to restore it and yet bring it into the modern age. Carol Morante's parents bought the house in 1943 and did much of the restoration themselves, although during the war it was hard to get supplies. Her father was a carpenter, so when it was time to jack up the 42-foot-long home he took it in stride. After her father's death, Carol's mother wanted to sell the house. But Ralph couldn't imagine the house not in their family and so convinced Carol that they should buy it. Carol's son continues to restore the house, when needed, although he does it as a hobby. He loves the house so much that he and his wife and children moved into part of it. Three generations live in that house together now, although their quarters are completely private and separate and each part is really a complete home.

The kitchen/family room of Carol and Ralph's part is the room that best reflects the age of the house. There is a dutch oven in the fireplace where all the cooking and bread baking was done. The cinders were "swept" into the front of the oven and then automatically fell down into the fireplace through a "secret" hole. The room was restored using old wood found in the attic. The ceilings are low, and all the oak beams are exposed. The "new" kitchen has all the modern amenities but the wonderful decorating still makes it feel old.

The dining room was also restored with original wood and it too has a fireplace. Windows are small and the door between the rooms has glass etched



Benjamin Colburn's home on Oak Street.

with red. The floors, although relatively new, seem comfortably and properly crooked!

The "front" room, now known as the living room, is furnished with lovely antiques and furniture. It became obvious that Carol had a special flair for decorating and she admitted that she is

The house as it looks today. The long el is hidden behind the trees on the right.

a professional decorator. In fact, her decorating skills are often in use because the furniture in that room is part of their business — Ralph and Carol are Lane Furniture distributors and their business is "Colburn House Interiors". One can go to their home and purchase couches and other pieces from their main rooms, or one can look leisurely through their catalogs and fabric samples. There are liberal discounts over retail stores. They have "been in business for 18 years now, but it still seems to be the best-kept secret in town," says Carol. (Editor's note: Not anymore!)

Carol admits that "the best time of all in an old home like this is holiday time. Sitting at the Thanksgiving table with our whole family, we often think of the rich history of the house and its past inhabitants. We even love all the creaks. And our grandchildren continue that lineage. This was my home as a child, so it is very sentimental."

Carol's daughter thought she saw a face one night in an upstairs bedroom. Perhaps it was Benjamin Colburn or Martha Jones, smiling at the caring people who have kept the home so well as a symbol of our Westwood heritage. ❑

Send all correspondence to:
Westwood
Community Newsletter
580 High Street
Westwood, MA 02090
Barbara M. Friedman, *Editor*

FEATURE STORY

Washington Street Improvement Project

Westwood has been negotiating with the Commonwealth about taking over the maintenance of Washington Street (Route 1A) in Westwood in exchange for money to help implement a master plan of road and area improvements. If that happens, the one mile strip of Washington Street from the intersection with Clapboardtree Street to the intersection with Gay Street will be the town's responsibility. But in exchange Westwood would have the opportunity to improve and change the aesthetics of Islington, which some claim is much needed.

The Town has hired the firms of Bruce Campbell and Associates, to address roadway improvements and Green Landscape Architecture Associates, to consult on the general aesthetics of the entire area. In July, Will Green held a meeting to address the design program he envisions for Islington and to receive resident feedback and suggestions. (Suggestions are always welcome — call Mike Jaillet at Town Hall.)

So, let's take a "walking tour" of the area, so well known to all Westwood residents, and discover what is good, bad, right and wrong about Islington.

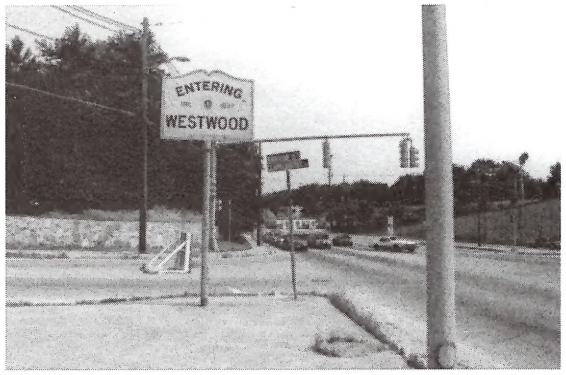
Southern Gateway to Westwood

What is wrong . . .

The intersection at Clapboardtree Street is the area of the most visual chaos and is generally non-welcoming to our town. One side is residential but without the vines and plantings that would make the area look welcoming; the other side is a strip mall without curbs, with poles and wires in full view, and with limited parking in the front of the stores. In addition, there is a wall in front of the train tracks. The area is a large expanse of pavement, the islands are paved and barren and there is no visual appeal.

Capitalize on what is right . . .

There is a lovely brook on the residential side. If the wall was taken away a nice sitting area could be created with flowers and benches. The fences in front of some lovely homes, probably there to block out the views, should be covered with vines and flowers to accentuate the residential quality. Islands should have plantings; there should be street trees; and curbs and parking need to be addressed.



Entrance to Westwood. A large expanse of pavement plus islands that are barren make this an unappealing entrance.

Central Business District

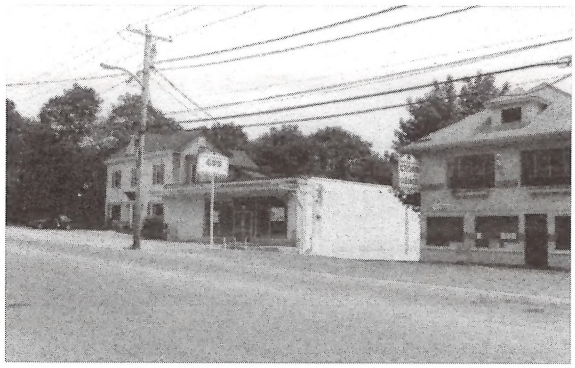
What is wrong . . .

This area, from Roche Bros. to just beyond the CVS, lacks a unified image. There is visual clutter; no definition of parking; no separation between parking, roadway and sidewalk making it difficult for pedestrian traffic; signage is disjointed; utility lines are visible and an eyesore; and clutter (mailboxes, newspaper boxes, etc.) are scattered.

Capitalize on what is right . . .

The Islington Community Church on the corner of East Street and Washington Street is beautiful. It has a tall steeple and is architecturally a typical New England church. The area surrounding the church needs to be landscaped and the church needs to be a focal point of the intersection. The library behind the church is also lovely and could be enhanced with a defined entranceway of trees, benches and flowers. Discussion about moving the fire department to another spot and creating a parking area that would also encompass the tennis court area is a possibility.

Entrance to Arlington. Street trees and plantings plus plantings on a center island with a sign on the island (wood and gold) make this an attractive entrance.



The Central Business District shows no definition and separation between sidewalk and street; no landscaping; visual intrusion of utility poles and wires; visual clutter; and architecture is unrelated.

The Central Business District in Lexington. The architecture relates to each other, street landscaping including brick pavement, granite tree planters, and no visual wires.

View on Washington St. of undefined, unbuffered parking area. A conflict exists with pedestrian and business use.

A gas station with parking area in Norwood. Notice enhanced buffer. Granite edge clearly defines pedestrian zone for safety and increased pleasure.

Northern Gateway to Westwood

What is wrong . . .

This is mostly a residential area beginning at Hogan Tire and extending to the beginning of the central business district. In places, the width of the road is too wide for pedestrians to cross easily; the curbs and sidewalks vary too much and in places don't exist; the only vegetation comes from people's yards giving the impression that the street is very wide; at the intersection of Gay Street utility poles and wires are in full view presenting a very unwelcoming sight.

Capitalize on what is right . . .

There are lovely homes on Washington Street and residents have done what they can to landscape and create a visual image of beauty. Continuing this with plantings and street trees for the entire stretch would create a unified image and enhance the beauty of the residential area. St. Denis Church is another lovely church whose beauty should be prominent.

Green Landscape Associates presented photos that compared Westwood to other towns, (Norwood, Walpole, Arlington, Newton and Lexington). When viewing these, some of the visual images become glaring (see pictures these pages). These towns certainly have many differences and they even have different economic potential. But they have all taken steps, that Westwood has not yet done but is ready and poised to do, to beautify their towns. Some of these steps are:

- The business walkways are often paved in a different material than residential walkways - brick in areas of businesses.
- There are uniform granite curbs with planters of flowers at curbside.
- Center islands through the business center have banners or baskets of flowers on poles or have plantings on the island.
- Signage for store names are uniform, either in font style, in location, or in material. Sometimes they are banners, sometimes they are against the building, sometimes they are on awnings but there should be something that unifies them.
- Utility wires are either underground or on one side of the street only.
- There are street trees with either grates on the sidewalk, or grate fences around them. Shrubs shield parking areas which are often behind the stores. Plantings provide strong edges.
- All the clutter is together in one area.

Westwood needs to decide the image desired for our town. We need to consider architecture, use, amenities and safety as the cornerstone of any plan. The vision is great, the benefits sizeable, in the self-esteem we have as a town. But how can we do this financially? Besides the condition of acceptance from the state, Westwood can look to state funding programs and grants, businesses themselves through cooperation and contribution, and public funding. (As an example of the latter, Needham added $2.00 per month for two years to each utility bill to pay for depressing utility wires in their town center.)

The Spring issue of this Community Newsletter focused on the University Avenue Industrial Park and its aesthetic problems. Here, we examine Washington Street. A community that is strong and vital can look at itself with critical, yet loving eyes. Like a parent with a child, we love the town despite its faults, yet we will always strive to help it become the best it can be. And it is to our credit that we are willing and eager to do so. ❑

SCHOOL NEWS

Nineteen New Staff Join School System

An early retirement incentive program offered to members of the Westwood Teachers' Association attracted fourteen participants (see Spring issue of the Newsletter for names). This created an unusual opportunity for the public schools to attract early career teachers. In all, nineteen vacancies have been filled for the 1994-95 school year. Over 2,500 applications were received from 37 states. This mountain of paper was initially reviewed by principals and central office staff who then scheduled screening interviews. Committees of teachers and parents interviewed semi-finalists, site visits were conducted and references were checked. This procedure resulted in the following individuals being offered, and accepting offers, to serve the children of Westwood:

- David Antonelli will join the Sheehan staff as a special education teacher. David earned his Certificate of Advanced Study from Boston College.
- James Ash will become a guidance counselor at the High School. He earned his Master's degree from the University of Connecticut.
- Maura Canavan will teach fourth grade at the Sheehan School. She has a Master's degree from Boston College.
- Elizabeth Herrick-Chapman will teach social studies at the Middle School. She has an M.Ed from Harvard University.
- Andy Frankenfield will also teach social studies at the Middle School and also has a Master's from Harvard.
- Martha Heller-Winokur will leave the faculty of Wheelock College to join the Sheehan staff as an Early Literacy Specialist.
- Meg Joyce will teach Middle School Language Arts. Meg received her Master's degree from Lesley College.
- Diane Kaiser will leave her faculty position at Elms College in Chicopee to become K-12 Director of Art. She has an MFA from Columbia University.
- Neil Kulik will join the Thurston faculty as a sixth grade teacher. He has a J.D. from Harvard Law School and an M.Ed from Harvard Graduate School of Education.
- Amy LaBelle will be a guidance counselor at the Downey School. She received her M.Ed from Northeastern University.
- Lauren Laurie joins the Martha Jones staff as a grade one teacher after receiving her M. Ed. from Lesley College.
- Stacy Leroux is the new Chapter One teacher at Martha Jones. She has her Master's degree from Lesley College.
- Heather Lortie will become a grade one teacher at the Hanlon School. She just graduated with a Bachelor's degree from Boston University.
- Erin McTernan will be a grade two teacher at Downey School. She received her Master's degree from Lesley College.
- Emily Parks completed her student teaching at Westwood High School last year and was offered a position in the social studies department after receiving her B.A. from Harvard in May.
- Andrea Peiser will teach grade one at Hanlon School. She has an M.Ed. from Harvard.
- Mary Reisert will join the Sheehan staff as a grade two teacher. She has an M.Ed. from Boston College.
- Olivia Smith will teach fourth grade at Downey School. She has a Master's degree from Wheelock College.
- Lisa White will teach grade four at Sheehan School. She has a Master's degree from Bridgewater State.

Westwood welcomes these new teachers and wishes them well. Theirs is an awesome task, for the future of our society will be sitting in their classrooms. ❑

Westwood High Students Study Town's History

Advanced placement is a curriculum program offered by the College Board to provide high school students with an opportunity to earn college credit before they receive their diplomas. To do this they must take a qualifying exam in May which tests what they have learned in the AP course. AP teachers have been challenged in the past to find meaningful activities for graduating seniors who have completed the exam but have several weeks to go before the end of the school year.

In anticipation of that, last winter AP teacher Tom Brown made contact with Joan Swann of the Westwood Historical Society and Bill Morrison of the Westwood Historical Commission to see if his AP students could assist in the preparation for the Town's Centennial Celebration in 1997. The offer was welcome and Lura Provost was contacted. Lura is presently updating Marjory Fenerty's 1972 history of Westwood entitled, "West Dedham and Westwood, 300 Years." She provided the Westwood High students a list of suggestions for independent study. After the AP exams this past May, Mr. Brown's students rolled up their sleeves, sharpened their pencils, plugged in the word processors and set to work on over a dozen projects. The following is a sample of some of their work:

- Sara Molloy and Jennifer Grady compared the 19th century curriculum from the old Fisher School with the present literacy curriculum from the Downey School.

Continued on page 7

Westwood High Students

Continued from page 6

- Karen Lepri and Beth Molloy studied ethnic demography in Westwood during the past twenty-five years.

- Sean Kelly and Bill Scales documented the recent relocation of the Baptist Church.

- Chris Berry and Erica Hesch charted trends in crime in Westwood between the early 1970's and the 1990's.

Other topics included the Blizzard of 1978, the Prudential project and a survey of historical sites.

Each of these projects provides an opportunity for the High School student to use the historiography skills that are learned in the regular social studies curriculum. These projects benefit the Westwood community as well by deepening our understanding of our community at no direct cost to the taxpayers. The completed student research will be added to the town archives and will become part of an addendum to Fenerty's book.

This is an excellent example of valued student contributions to our Town and an excellent example of how a teacher uses community service learning to enrich student coursework. Bravo!

***Correction**: In the Spring newsletter the little boy with the sunglasses on the cover was incorrectly identified. He is James Thomas Looney and not Tyler Smith Flynn. Sorry!*

Spotlight on . . . Thurston Middle School

Edmund W. Thurston Middle School occupies the original 1938 building designed for Westwood High School. The school is named for the Town's superintendent during the 1940's and 1950's. In 1991 the school committee voted to discontinue the "junior high" approach to early adolescent schooling and the words "middle school" were added to the name instead of the previously named "junior high". That decision complemented the Town's decision to pass a bond issue which renovated the school both inside and outside.

Today, Thurston Middle School houses the school system's sixth, seventh and eight grades, with an anticipated Fall enrollment of 405 students.

In 1992, Maureen Szal joined the staff as principal to lead the implementation of a middle school philosophy and programming. An interdisciplinary teaming model, introduced in 1972, enables the faculty to work with groups of 120-140 students in order to give each child, and each teacher, the opportunity to work together. Under the direction of team leaders (there is no assistant principal in the school), teachers work with parents to insure that students learn to be responsible about their behavior through making good decisions. Teachers on each team meet several times a week to discuss student progress and plan ways of implementing the curriculum.

An exciting development is that each year teachers from across the disciplines work together to implement curriculum projects that enable students to see connections between the subjects they study. For example, a life skills (what used to be called home economics) teacher works with the math, language arts and science teachers to design and make quilts which reflect environmental issues. The eighth grade "Facing History" program challenges students to understand man's inhumanity to man by reading and writing about their reflections on the history of the twentieth century. In 1992 a performing arts program was implemented for all middle school children which requires students to express ideas through artistic and dramatic expression. In 1993 the Middle School science curriculum began a complete revision requiring students to learn to think as scientists through greater emphasis on laboratory problem solving. One project allowed students to work directly with a scientist both in the school and at his work at Brigham and Women's Hospital.

The Westwood Educational Foundation has financially supported the quilt project, the performing arts programs and the scientist-in-residence project as well as other middle school initiatives. Barbara Friedman, outgoing President of the Foundation, noted at the May grant awards ceremony, that the staff and students at Thurston Middle School were the only ones that initiated their own fundraising project to support the Foundation. She praised the students for taking ownership of their own education and expressed gratitude to the teachers and students for their expression of their thanks to the Foundation for the support of the school and its programs.

Thurston Middle School's staff, students and parents have a mission — to create a place where children become excited about the world of possibilities that lie ahead of them. They are certainly working hard, and successfully, to fulfill that mission.

TOWN BULLETIN BOARD

TOWN AND SCHOOL EVENTS AND HOLIDAYS

September 25	Westwood Transportation Show 11:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. Westwood High School (see Did You Know Inside)
October 2	Walk for Westwood 1:30 Registration, Westwood High School Sponsored by Westwood Educational Foundation — Raindate: October 16
October 10	Columbus Day — Schools and Town Hall closed
October 11	Westwood Historical Society — 8:00 P.M. Westwood Masonic Building, 655 High Street • Presentation of Quarter Century Award • Illustrated talk, "S.S. Pierce and the Gourmet Palates he Catered To" by Anthony Sammarco
October 28	Schools closed — Staff Development
November 11	Veterans Day ceremony at Veterans Park 11:00 A.M. Schools and Town Hall closed
November 24	Thanksgiving — Schools and Town Hall closed
November 25	Schools closed

Note: On weeks with holidays, trash pick-up is delayed one day.

PUBLIC LIBRARY PROGRAMS

Main Library Programs for Preschoolers

Sept 12-Oct 17 Nov 7-Dec 12	Activity Time Children 2 years and up with adult 10:15 - 10:45 A.M. Mondays
Sept 13-Oct 18 Nov 8-Dec 13	Parent/Child Storyhour Children 2 1/2 and up with adult 10:15 - 11:00 A.M. Tuesdays
Sept 14-Oct 19 Nov 9 - Dec 14	Storytime Children 3 1/2 - 5 years 10:15 - 11:00 A.M. Wednesdays

Registration for the above three programs began August 15th

Main Library Programs for School Age Children

Sept 13-Dec 13	Wishing Well Children in K - 3 3:30 - 4:30 P.M. Tuesdays Folk tales, films and crafts Registration required
Sept 22- Dec 1 Bi-weekly	Book Mates Reading Club Students in grades 3 -5 3:30 - 4:30 P.M. Thursdays Book discussion, crafts, special projects Registration required
Oct 5- Nov 9	Babysitting Clinic Students in grades 6 - 8 6 Wednesday sessions, 3:30 - 4:30 P.M. Registration required

Main Library Family Programs

October 24	Halloween Storytime Children ages 2 and up Costumes, stories, songs and treats 10:30 A.M. - Registration required
Oct 1, Nov 5 Dec 3	Saturday Special Storyhour for children 2 1/2 and up and families 10:30 A.M. — Registration begins one month prior

Main Library Parent-Child Social Hours

Sept 22, Oct 20, Nov 18	10:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

Main Library Early Childhood Council Speaker Series

Dates and Topics To Be Announced

Islington Branch Programs for Preschoolers

Sept 15-Oct 20 Nov 10-Dec 15	Storytime for 3 - 5 year olds 9:30 - 10:15 A.M. Thursdays Registration began Aug 16 and Sept 8 (Non-residents)
Sept 20-Oct 25 Nov 15- Dec 13	Drop-in Storytime Just for 4's and 5's 1:30 - 2:00 P.M. Tuesdays No registration required

Islington Branch Programs for School Age Children

Oct 11, 25 Nov 1, 15, 29	Young Readers Book Club Students in grades 2-4 3:15 - 4:00 P.M. Tuesdays Books and special projects

This Fall in Westwood
580 High Street
Westwood, MA 02090

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Westwood MA
Permit #22